





# THE REVIVAL

OF THE

## RELIGIOUS MENDICANT ORDERS.

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‘ You come to me—  
You say, “ We would have monies.” *You* say so—  
*You* that did . . . spit upon my beard,  
And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur  
Over your threshold.’

SHAKESPEARE.

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BY  
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TRIN. COLL. CAM.

LONDON:  
PROTESTANT ALLIANCE, 9 STRAND.  
1876.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

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‘Our chief object is not to assist the poor. No! that is for us only a means—our object is to keep them in the Catholic Faith, and to propagate it amongst others by means of charities.’—*Works of F. Ozonam, Founder of the Society of St. Vincent-de-Paul*, vol. viii. p. 45.

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**N**O one can fail to remark the very large increase in the number of Sisters of Mercy, met with in the course of our daily walks through London, indeed, if it were possible not to remark them as casual passers-by, their repeated visits at our doors asking for aid in their works would in itself compel us to acknowledge their presence among us as an ‘accomplished fact,’ for it is impossible to walk for half-an-hour through the Metropolis without seeing some of these Sisters standing at a street door ‘asking an alms,’ and neither house, shop, nor office, is long free from their persevering calls.\*

Whether the revival of the Religious Mendicants in our midst is likely to be beneficial to this country is of course a matter of opinion, but one thing is certain—viz., that every country which has had any practical experience of them has successively suppressed them. That they are a most devoted band given to good works and a life of charity and self-sacrifice is undeniable, but it is equally true that they are

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\* On the 30th August, 1875, two ‘Sisters’ were taken up by the police at Derby for a breach of the Vagrancy Act. They were found to have obtained about 2*l.* in three-quarters of an hour by begging from door to door, and they had a circular with the ‘approval’ of Henry Edward Archbishop of Westminster, and Edward Bishop of Nottingham. The chief constable said he was prepared to deal with the case as one of vagrancy, as there was no doubt the Sisters were acting illegally. Canon M’Kenna addressed the bench in favour of the Sisters, but the magistrates considered the chief constable had done quite right in bringing the case before them, but that if these persons were not going to proceed further in Derby in the way described they would allow the matter to be withdrawn. Canon M’Kenna asked that the various documents might be returned to the Sisters; the chief constable opposed this, and, on the advice of the clerk, no order was made respecting the documents; the matter being left to the chief constable.



recognised as the most useful advanced guard, and most profitable pioneers of their Church ; that their work of charity is most strictly combined with that of proselytizing, and that no one continues long a recipient of their bounty who does not conform to their rules, obey their discipline, or join their communion.

Of course their well-known reply to objectors is, ' We take in, and protect *all*, regardless of their creed ;' but it is this very point which requires investigation, for we find that this apparently unselfish charity is invariably associated with the inculcation of their peculiar tenets by the most unsuspected artifices, the most elementary works on geography, history, or arithmetic, being utilised to convey doctrine to the learners.

Let us take as an instance the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, generally recognised as the type *par excellence* of all charitable fraternities. What do we find its own founder, Frederic Ozonam, saying in 1853, at Florence ? '*Our chief object is not to assist the poor. No ! that is for us only a means. Our object is to keep them steadfast in the Catholic faith, and to propagate it amongst others by means of charities.*' (Works of F. Ozonam, published by his Society, vol. viii. page 45.)

Let us then remember when we aid them that their 'charity is only a means,' and that all their societies are affiliations of a vast system ; local bodies, or 'conferences,' being united to a 'General Conference,' which again is connected with a central directing authority, just as in the organization of the Jesuits and other kindred orders, of which (as the Comte de Passeran said at the close of the last century) the monks obey the guardian, the guardian obeys the prior, the prior the provincial, the provincial the general of the order, who in his turn obeys the Pope. Every member of these communities takes a solemn vow of implicit obedience to the superiors under severe penalties ; just then as a sovereign, by one word to his commander-in-chief, can put in movement an entire army, even so the Pope, by one command to the generals of the Orders who are always about him, can instantly direct the members of these institutions, and their affiliated societies,—a matter deserving the serious consideration of every government, the more so since every general of an order, except that of the Carthusians, resides at Rome.

It is not however so much of the close and contemplative orders that we would now treat, as of the numerous 'congregations,' or nominally charitable societies, which abound even in England, and may be looked on as the skirmishers and outposts of the Roman army, and of which the Society of St. Vincent de Paul is the chief.

As to the abject subjection of the members of the closer orders, we have a tolerable sample of it in 'The True Spouse of Christ,' a work by that celebrated saint, Liguori, and of which the following is a specimen—

'The principal and most efficacious means of practising the obedience due to Superiors and of rendering it meritorious before God, is to consider that in obeying them we obey God Himself. . . In obeying their directions, the Nun is more sure of performing the will of God than if an Angel came from Heaven to manifest his will to her. . . There is more certainty

of doing the will of God by obedience to Superiors than by obedience to Jesus Christ, should He appear in person and give His commands; for should Jesus Christ appear to a "Religious," she would not be certain whether it were He that spoke, or an evil spirit who, under the appearance of the Redeemer, wished to deceive her. . . . To try the obedience of their subjects, Superiors sometimes impose commands that are inexpedient and even ridiculous. St. Francis commanded his disciples to plant cabbages with their root uppermost; he obliged brother Matthew to continue turning till he fell to the ground. *Perfect obedience requires a soul without a will, and a will without an intellect.*

A result easily arrived at we should think, if all the saint says is to be practised. He goes on :—

'Defects committed after profession by a good religious are expiated by her in this world . . . by mortifications, such as fasts, hair-cloths, disciplines, and watchings; some hair-cloths are made of strong coarse hair, the others are bands or chains of brass or iron wire, worn on the arms, legs, or shoulders: disciplines or flagellations are a species of mortification universally adopted in religious communities of both sexes; all modern saints, without a single exception, have continually practised this sort of penance.

' . . . Seculars take discipline when they please, but the religious performs these duties at the times prescribed by obedience, that is, by the Holy Will of God, for in her Rule and in the commands of her Superior she hears His voice. . . . The Practice of Penance should be regulated by the Confessor. . . . The young must be treated with severity when necessary, the Superior when correcting abuses and relaxations of exact observance requires a soul of bronze; . . . some hearts are so hard that they feel only when pierced with a dart. . . '

Our saint does not use any uncertain phrases; but to return to our Mendicants.

This obedience and disciplined organization of the Regulars is to be extended to these also, and to the numerous Societies which are at present more or less independent. The plan proposed is, we understand, to leave the nominal Presidents in their places, but to make the various Bishops the actual Presidents of these Associations throughout their Dioceses; the Metropolitan again is to preside over the several Bishops, and he it is who will keep up all communications with the Vatican, where a special section of the Ecclesiastical Department will take charge of these matters.

Thus the Pope will be able to wield at his will these associations (lay and clerical), uniformly and simultaneously, without in any way appearing to alter their external character of free and legal Societies; they are also to be extended on a much larger scale in the United States, where they will centre in the new Cardinal, M'Closkey, [See *Allgemeine Italienische Correspondenz*. September, 1875.]

The influence and wealth of some of these Associations is testified to in the *Report of the General Assembly of Parochial Committees* at Marseilles, in November, 1874. In one year they had received 239,000 francs, or about 10,000*l.*, in that town alone; but great as this success was it is little in comparison of the moral good effected. 'You have,' says the Report, 'supported newspapers which have already rendered good service not only around us, but have gone far beyond this Diocese and Department, extending far and



wide in this period of lies and ignorance, the inestimable advantage of truth and sound doctrine . . . We have asked for the aid of all the Parochial Committees for our Schools ; we now ask it to be as ready and devoted to *influence the Press*. You, Parochial Associations, are the most important portion of the Society for defending Catholic interests ; you are working for the future ; you are the foundation, the strength, and the resisting power of our Association. The day when every parish has its Catholic Committee, the revolution will be conquered : for we Catholics have both right, and we have numbers ; *we have only to wish it, to become a material force*. You are, gentlemen, now by tens, twenties, and fifties, in your Societies ; it is a hundred, five hundred, and a thousand, you should number at our next annual meeting.'

Such are the sentiments, such the bold and defiant language of these Associations, who profess to exist only for brotherly love and the benefit of others.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is, as we have observed above, universally considered typical of all that is noble and generous, self-sacrificing and devoted ; and may, in its governing system, be considered as the representation of all similar Communities, so we will give a slight sketch of its aims and working, more especially as exemplified in France—*ab uno disce omnes*.

It originated in the year 1833, when eight law-students led by the youthful master-mind of Ozonam, associated themselves together with the object of visiting the sick poor in one of the most wretched quarters of Paris ; and under the patronage of the Society of Jesus, together with such supporters as Chateaubriand, Lacordaire, and Montalembert, it spread itself in less than five years through the whole of the Continent ; in due time was enriched with Special Indulgences, honoured by the appointment of a Cardinal-Protector of the Society at Rome, and its rules of organization and administration completed in exact imitation of those of the Jesuits. They may be found in the Manual of the Society.

In fact, charge is taken of the nominal poor by this Society, from the cradle to the grave : the *Avocat des familles* aids 'the pious' in their law business, and obtaining the 'rights' they may deem themselves entitled to ; their rents are paid ; their comforts seen to ; their savings preserved ; soldiers in every regiment are sought out to join the 'faithful' in different '*congregations*' to such an extent as even to interfere with regimental discipline, and cause complaints on this head from commanding officers. The poor, however, are not the only ones cared for by this philanthropic Society ; marriages are regularly arranged for its *protégés*, male and female, even those in 'good society,' so that the youthful devotee receives reward even in this life ; any one conversant with the French Bar, knows from experience that one of the most sure and rapid means for obtaining a successful career and good appointments is to belong to one of these 'Congregations.' Registries are also kept for placing out 'pious' servants, and many of the aristocratic faithful never go elsewhere for their domestics ; nor, indeed, is it considered right, by devout heads of families, to do so.



The supervision of literature and publishing of good works which favour the propaganda of Ultramontane views is another great engine employed; and not only does this Society of St. Vincent circulate 'good' books but destroys those which it considers bad; for the Bishop of Perigueux, in the Bulletin of the Society for May, 1860, mentions the fact of one of its 'conferences' having destroyed a considerable number of novels and 'impious works,' with the consent of their owner, the proprietor of a circulating library: but their paternal solicitude for the good of their fellow-creatures extends yet further, they even buy up at the second-hand book-stalls such works as they consider prejudicial to their views; and this is a fact which has been vouched for to the writer of these pages by many of the 'Bouquinistes' of Paris.

Even the Commercial Traveller not unfrequently owes his success to his being a member of such a Body, for we may well imagine the number of recommendations and the influence possessed by such patrons, who it is well known invariably decline entering into any transactions with those who are not affiliated to, or sent by, some corresponding 'Conference,' and the same remark applies to every branch of trade; while those thus helped and patronised are of course subservient to their patrons' orders, and are expected to requite them financially or otherwise; but the one requisite in every instance is that each person so encouraged shall be a strict Catholic, and relentless refusal of those of any other Faith is the unvarying rule, so that though it may be true that those of other creeds partake of their charity, yet it is with the exclusive object of bringing over the recipient to the only Church which has ever declared that out of its own pale there is no salvation.

Indeed, to such an extent had these various '*charitable*' communities increased, and so numerous were the complaints of abuses of their power, such as the abduction of children, or the undue influence they exerted to obtain wills in their favour, to the detriment of families, that petitions were received by the French Senate praying for inquiry into and protection against them, which resulted in a Commission of inquiry being appointed in 1860, and their publication of a Report full of interest respecting this subject.

In 1861 appeared the famous circular\* of M. de Persigny to the various Prefects, calling attention to these formidable and illegal combinations, and directing the suppression of their Superior Councils, which produced great excitement in the Ultramontane camp, giving rise to prolonged debates in the Senate, where Baron Dupin explained that this step was necessitated by the constantly increasing power

\* It stated that out of 68 male communities only 19 were authorised, and that the teaching and preaching bodies directed no less than 3000 establishments or schools, and contained 14,300 'religious' and about 351,000 scholars; that there were throughout France 4932 authorised communities and 2870 unauthorised, making a total of 7802. Their real estate is roughly estimated at four millions sterling, while their securities in shares and bonds to bearer cannot be traced in any way; but one thing the Report says in conclusion—'It is impossible to have any idea of what may now be the value of possessions which, to use the terms of the Edict of 1749, cannot be diminished by gifts or alienations, but, on the other hand, are constantly increasing by new acquisitions.'

obtained by these Societies, which now resembled what they were in 1818, when it became a matter of difficulty to obtain any Government employ, or indeed any advancement anywhere, without belonging to them—when religion was made the means of obtaining a place and aiding petty ambitions. It was proved that there were at that moment 3075 female *authorised* communities, and about 90 new ones established yearly ; that in four years the bequests for religious objects amounted to about one million sterling, but this included only those sums for which Government authorisation had been asked, and that as far as the ‘unauthorised’ possessions were concerned, they must at least amount to about 40 million sterling. This shows the rapid progress of which these corporations are capable, for at the beginning of the present century the authentic official documents show that there were in France about 800 Religious establishments for men and 300 for women, possessing in all 50,000 inmates ; while, according to the census of 1861, there were about 108,000 members of Religious communities, so that their numbers had doubled within the last 80 years, though the total of the population had remained nearly what it then was.

These ‘Religious,’ as they are termed, may be divided into three distinct classes—

	Men.	Women.
Those devoted to Teaching . . .	12,800	59,000
„ „ Nursing . . .	390	20,000
„ „ Refuges . . .	490	3,000
„ immured by perpetual vows . .	4,040	8,100
	<hr/> 17,720	<hr/> 90,100
Making a total of monks, friars, brothers, nuns, sisters, amounting to . . .	<hr/> 107,820 <hr/>	

possessing no less than the following number of *buildings*—

	Men.	Women.
Principal houses or institutions . . .	58	361
Independent „ „ . . .	37	595
Branch establishments . . .	1,931	11,050
	<hr/> 2,026	<hr/> 12,006
	<hr/> 14,032 <hr/>	

Only a certain number of these however have a legal status and are recognised by the French Government,—the condition being that before this can be done the Institution must show that it has pecuniary means of existence ; by this official ‘recognition’ it then obtains important privileges, or what we may call ‘civil rights,’ such as the power of inheriting, purchasing, selling, and holding property, prosecuting or being sued as a corporate body ; those Institutions which have not obtained such status are illegal, and are only tolerated by the indulgence of the authorities.

The great object of these new ones is, therefore, to obtain means sufficient to justify their application for recognition, and the origin and rise of these associations is generally the same.



As an instance of their rapid rise, we will select the '*Little Sisters of the Poor*,' who may be daily seen in our London streets in their mournful garb driven in a van, in which are baskets and buckets for the broken meats obtained from the Clubs, or great houses.

They originated in a little village of Brittany, where, in 1840, two young girls of the working classes desirous of taking religious vows consulted their Priest on the matter, who advised them to wait, and meanwhile to give themselves up to acts of kindness to the poor. This they began by attending to an old blind woman, and being joined by a retired charwoman, with an income of 25*l.* a-year, they took a garret, and eventually, by the aid of the charitable, a ground-floor, which they fitted up with a few beds, and went about begging, basket in hand, to obtain help for the cripples thus tended by the four women. Great were their distresses and difficulties, yet within three years they were able to purchase the house at a cost of nearly 900*l.*, and by 1849 one of the Sisters came to Paris, where in an incredibly short time they numbered three houses and about 100 Sisters, were officially recognised in 1856, and have ramifications, not only throughout all the chief places in France, but, as we daily see, in England also. Were it required, we could refer our readers to an interesting proof of the truth of our assertion in the words of Camus, Bishop of Belley, in his Commentaries on St. Augustin, '*L'Ouvrage des Moines* :—

'We have seen in small localities institutions started by two or three of these *devout beggars*, who have gone on with building schemes which would have astonished many a millionaire, and no wonder, for they would have built in proportion to their means, whereas the beggars I speak of carried out their projects and schemes at the cost of others; and indeed it is only those who are liberal with that which costs them nothing that are thus lavish and borrow boldly, knowing well that they can themselves neither suffer in person or in goods.'

Such is the testimony of a Bishop of their own Church more than a century ago.

Many of the larger Convents have established manufactories as a means of profit and influence; of these are the Monks who distil the admirable liqueur called '*Chartreuse*'; the Trappists have a Tannery at La Meilleraie; the Carmelite Nuns of Le Mans have a painted glass manufactory; and at the Seminary of Luxeil, Kirsch (or cherry brandy) is prepared. At Bar, the Convent is renowned for its sweetmeats, while most of them have needlework done by their novices and postulants at such absurdly low rates, as to take away all such work from the poor women who would otherwise earn an honest livelihood in this way.

In order to take all power of competition from the workwomen, these '*Religious*' take in plain needlework at a reduction of at least 25 per cent on the usual rates. Shirts are made for prices varying from 2½*d.* to 6*d.*, says M. Jules Simon; while, according to the well-known paper, '*Le Peuple*,' one Sisterhood which possesses sewing-machines does them for 4*d.* a piece! so that while thousands of wretched workwomen are in privation from want of work, or the starvation prices given for their labour, these Conventual Corporations



which possess millions a-year between them, enter into commercial rivalry with them under conditions which preclude all competition, and take the miserable pittance which would keep them from being driven into vicious courses through sheer destitution. It is a subject which has given rise already to various remonstrances, not only from this unfortunate class, but from heads of large manufactories in various parts of the country.

What would our industrial classes say to this? They who grumble and send noisy deputations to Ministers, on the competition raised by Prison Labour and Co-operative Stores? But this is a regularly organized system; at Marseilles, where the religious communities are so numerous, the children confided to them rise at 5 in the morning, and their entire day, with the exception of *one hour* for instruction, is given entirely to shirt-making for wholesale dealers and the export trade of that vast city. This conventual industry is organized on a large scale, and pushed with *untiring* perseverance.

In most of these Institutions, children of 12 years of age are expected to finish four men's shirts in a week, so that these Religious Houses which bear the sign of the cross, or of some saint of either sex, are in reality workshops of female industry, so organized as to offer a disastrous and crushing competition to the free labour of the sempstresses, and which the latter, often hard-working mothers of families, cannot withstand with all the efforts of their underpaid labour. The most prosperous of these corporations is that of the 'Ladies of St. Vincent-de-Paul,' whose vans regularly fetch the materials and return them when completed, and whose Institution has raised itself to the first rank of commercial undertakings in Marseilles!

Near Bayonne is also a Convent which does grievous harm to the working-classes throughout that neighbourhood by its absorption of everything connected with female labour—embroidery, laces, linen, trousseaux, and small fineries connected with female dress—all are here made on a large scale, and all the fashionables of this and surrounding counties make their purchases there. The natural result is that while the Convent is making money rapidly, the working woman who is obliged to be with her husband or family, simply starves for want of work, or, as has recently been done, they have to emigrate to Spain, South America, or the United States.

Thus we see under a religious disguise, and all the *etiquette* of holiness, a vast machinery for making money for the Church, for competing with the hard industry of the working-classes, and for spreading widely-extended influence over the entire population—nominally for their good, but in reality for the extension of Sacerdotalism.

The same course is already beginning to get a footing in this country, where we find the 'Poor Servants of the Mother of God' undertaking the getting up of woollen and silk materials, and fine muslins; the Sisters of St. Vincent-de-Paul at Liverpool execute all sorts of orders for embroidered silks, laces, church linen, &c.; so do the Sisters of Mercy at Perry-Barr in plain linen, those of the Convent in Blandford Square, London, and many others too numerous to detail, but worthy of being watched by our working-classes. Articles

from crochet work to beautifully embroidered handkerchiefs, at really nominal prices which utterly defy all competition from those who are obliged to earn their living by their needle. The following extract shows that this abuse is on the increase:—

“The *République de la Sarthe* complains bitterly of the “disastrous competition” to which the working women of the district are exposed in consequence of the malignant industry of the convents. The nuns, it appears, filch all the business in women’s work for the great milliners’ shops of Paris, thanks to the low prices they are enabled to charge owing to their life in common and “the privileges they enjoy.” As religious establishments under modern French law are certainly not privileged in any technical sense, the last-mentioned cause of the low prices charged by the convents must mean the contributions of the faithful. The present consequences of this competition are, says the Republican journalist, most lamentable; “the free working women can only find work at ridiculously low prices,” and “all the immoral and inhuman consequences that flow from this state of things” are suggestively said to be indescribable. But the most significant part of the statement is that “a group of deputies has been invited to ask the National Assembly to remedy this abuse by imposing a very heavy license duty on the religious establishments that devote themselves to this kind of work.” This measure the *République de la Sarthe* calls the re-establishment of the equilibrium between the price of handiwork in the convent and outside.”—*Pall Mall Gazette*, Oct. 25, 1875.

The gross and notorious ignorance of the ‘Brothers’ and ‘Sisters’ to whom is confided the education of the hundreds of thousands of children in France and other Roman Catholic countries is also truly lamentable—even worse than the degraded educational condition of the Priests in Ireland, for out of some 8000 assistant-teachers it was found that 7000 had not any diploma of capacity, and amongst the Sisters not one out of every hundred had obtained, or was capable of obtaining it. Like ‘Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin,’ the Church of Rome ‘makes priests of the lowest of the people,’ and unfortunately extends this system to those intrusted with the education of the rising generation. They are for the most part the children of peasants, working men, or domestic servants; a ‘vocation,’ often so *effectually* concealed as to be utterly invisible to the outer world, a black gown, and the power of discerning one letter of the alphabet from the other, this is all that is required—no previous instruction, moral, intellectual, or educational, is ever thought of. The natural result of such an indiscriminate acceptance of every candidate as teacher has been productive of disorders and scandals which we are unable to detail, but acknowledged in a remarkable circular issued on 2nd May, 1861, by the Superior General of the Christian Brethren to the Directors of his 700 different establishments, and in which he speaks of—

‘the gross corruption which prevails throughout the Order he governs, notwithstanding two previous similar circulars he had issued in Nov. 1854, and May, 1860, which had not been productive of the slightest good.’

He adds—

‘If up to the present time we have alluded to such corruption in covert phrases, the time has come when we can no longer use such delicacy, when we consider the grave circumstances and deplorable facts which occur almost



consecutively. You know that some of our number and of other congregations are in penal servitude, judicial indictments are preparing against others,—the scandal is broad-cast and notorious. . . .

Then comes a sad acknowledgment of the pitiable ignorance which reigns amongst them—

‘Many of our beloved brothers the Directors are not strict in reading the letters written by their subordinates, either to their families or others, so that these letters, often written in a bad frame of mind and *full of mistakes*, are handed from one person to another, very frequently to our grievous confusion. . . .’

And yet these are the people to whom the education of a vast proportion of the rising population is committed—a class of ‘Brother’ enjoying privileges for tuition if stationary, or for locomotion if necessary,—which ordinary tutors, governesses, or teachers are refused.

Though teaching is done gratuitously, they receive gifts and bequests, carry on a brisk trade in their school-books (of which they are simultaneously compilers and editors), chaplets, medals, images, and school requisites; they are free from taxation, or liability to conscription for military service, even when only employed as cooks or domestics in their respective ‘congregations;’ no examinations are required from these amateur teachers previously to their taking pupils. Amongst the ‘Brethren’ it has been calculated that such is their abject ignorance that hardly ten assistant-masters in a hundred have passed any examination to fit them for educating the young; and as to the ‘Sisters,’ out of 8000 ‘Superiors,’ over 7000 have no ‘diploma,’ and of their ‘Assistants,’ only one in every hundred has passed for it, or is capable of so doing; and yet there are supposed to be over 72,000 of these ‘religious,’ devoted to instruction only, to whom the education of no less than 2,000,000 of children is confided—which will explain the cause of the dense ignorance which reigns amongst the lower orders in France, and which is the very natural result of making the lowest of the people the chief instructors of the rising generation. A specimen of the way in which the transformation from gross ignorance to approved qualification for tuition takes place, was given in a pamphlet written by a very clever French teacher, Mademoiselle Daobié, and which created some sensation a few years ago. She said, ‘A cow-herd unable to read, used to ask me (then eight years of age) to teach her the Catechism. She then went to the Convent, and to my astonishment I found next year my old pupil transformed into a “dear Sister,” patronising me, and prepared to go forth with her “*letter of obedience*”—to teach all nations; the translation was certainly sudden.’ This letter of obedience is the remarkable and powerful document we have alluded to; tutors and governesses have to spend time, money, and labour to obtain their diploma, it yet confers not the smallest right or advantage, whereas this ‘letter’ confers distinct privileges and acknowledged status. Often in our Continental rambles, have we stood at a railway ticket office near a ‘Sister,’ who, on asking for a ticket, has been required to show her ‘letter of obedience,’ on exhibi-



tion of which she pays only half price on most lines. This document bearing the signature of the Superior, opens every door, smooths every difficulty, takes the place of a passport, is the only means of civil identification, and many a time has enabled a '*Brother*,'—when 'wanted' by the Police for those offences which the French papers show to be so common amongst them—to elude the law, by a judicious retirement to another House of the Order, under *another* appellation, so that even if traced there, the Superior can truthfully take an oath that Brother So-and-So is not with him; as instances we can cite out of many the scandalous trials at Angers and Saintes in 1861, and the extraordinary one at Ghent of three Priests, a Sister of Charity, and a milliner, where it was proved that the German girl of 17 they had 'converted' was carried from one convent to another through Belgium and France under various disguises and names, to elude the Belgian police.

In Italy we find the '*Osservatore Romano*' (an unimpeachable authority) saying, in its number of 7th August, 1875, 'We have in Italy a sacred flock composed of 96,651 Priests, 11,055 Monks and Friars, and 30,909 Nuns;' and as to their educational capacities in the Italian States we have interesting and authentic evidence (in the Statistical Report on Education presented by the Minister of Public Instruction in 1865), that the education, as conducted in the Seminaries and by ecclesiastical teachers, deteriorates as the importance of the subject taught increases; that History, Geography, Arithmetic, Physics, &c., are much neglected, and instruction generally is greatly stunted, little is taught, and all improved modern methods of tuition despised by these half educated ecclesiastical teachers. Of course, these defects have a serious effect on the rising generation, and we find that the great majority of youths educated in these Seminaries afterwards enter into various branches of employment in civil life for which they are utterly unprepared, and cannot even pass the elementary examinations required by Government institutions.

Of most Seminaries, such as those of Pistoia, Florence, Bologna, Pisa, Lucca, &c., it is proved that study could not be in a worse state; masters have neither diplomas nor academical titles, nor are they qualified to instruct; youths who hardly can read are allowed to enter the first gymnasial class without examination, and pass through subsequent classes similarly at the will of the masters—some of whom are only 19 years of age!—and the Inspectors declare that they met with the most distressing cases of ignorance in youths who had already commenced their theological studies; the natural result being that at the completion of their course they leave without that most elementary knowledge which would save them from the grossest superstition, and from the arts of those who misrepresent past and present alike to pervert the minds of an uneducated populace.

Some of the rules of these religious bodies are curious, and show that the instances of what they are pleased to call obedience, and which were divulged in the long trial of Saurin *v.* Starr, are quite usual.\*

\* See '*Règles de la Congrégation des Frères de Ste. Croix du Mans*,' which forcibly recall the practices exhibited in the case of Saurin *v.* Starr.

Amongst them are as follows :

— Rule 12.—State what is or will be your fortune.

— Rule 68.—Acts of humiliation are to be readily undertaken, such as confessing one is in the wrong, kissing the ground, or the feet of the other brethren.

— Rule 91.—Private friendships amongst the brethren are to be avoided as destructive to common brotherhood, and even to union with God.

— Rule 99.—Even so is excessive love for one's parents or for one's family.

— Rule 304.—No laymen are to be housed by the brethren except under extreme urgency and by the permission of the Superior, who will never grant it for the relations of a 'Religious'—even were they his father and mother !

— Rule 331.—It is forbidden to visit one's relations without special necessity, which is to be judged of by the Provincial.

— Rule 346.—In the holidays a visit to one's family is to be avoided without a well-considered permission from the Provincial, who is not to grant it easily.

Besides many others equally hard and unnatural ; one specially forbids even '*the desire* to learn Latin, as a temptation of the Devil, who is probably thus seeking their perdition by a secret pride concealed under an apparent zeal for the good of others'—in fact all desire of progress and all liberty—except that giving up one's liberty—are condemned as inventions of Satan !

By a law passed in 1809 by the Emperor Napoleon all rules of religious bodies in France must be sanctioned by the State ; novices under 16 cannot take any vows, those under 21 may take vows for one year only, above 21 for five years only, and this must be done in presence of the Bishop or his delegate, and of a civil functionary, who will register the fact in duplicate, one copy being handed to the Superior of the Institution, the other kept at the offices of the Municipal Authorities of the district.

Yet there appears to be no provision for tracing the person in after years, if necessary, by the new name they always assume on their being 'received'—the civil power does not seem to take any means to extend its care to those who once take this irrevocable step—their identity is entirely lost without recovery, both to their families and the State, who are thus both precluded from any surveillance or protection over them, no matter what they may endure, or however much they may desire to be released. The inmates of Religious Communities however retain all civil capacities, and are not dead in the eyes of the French law, nor can they be detained by force.

We may be permitted to have our doubts respecting the accuracy of the returns furnished by these pious people for the census and other statistical purposes of State, from the fact that the number of Jesuits returned in the last census is only about 1080, whereas the Ultramontane paper '*Le Monde*,' and the '*Civiltà Cattolica*,' the organ of the Society, compute that there were at that time over 2300 in France.



The total number of persons living, either directly or indirectly, by religious profession in 1861 is stated by M. Jung, in his 'France et Rome,' to be nearly 80,000 men and 125,000 women, and the total of secular and regular 'Religious,' male and female, amounts to over 309,000 souls.

The Statistical Society of Paris has collected some additional figures which are of equal interest to those who attend to the rapid growth of these communities.

From 1852 to 1859 Brotherhoods received about 37,000*l.* in gifts and donations alone, and Sisterhoods about 360,000*l.* The real estates owned by them are valued at 4½ millions, containing 23,000 acres in 1850 and 35,000 in 1859, thus nearly doubling itself in nine years, at which rate they must own about 75,000 acres at the present time.

Strict accuracy cannot be hoped for, as every difficulty has been persistently thrown in the way of each consecutive Government which has attempted to ascertain the number of Religious,—this fact is not only proved by the official correspondence and documents, but by the discrepancies between the figures given by the ecclesiastical authorities and those found in the *Annuaire Romain, Statistique Générale*, and the *Annuaire du Clergé Français*.

It is however clear to the merest tourist that France is quite the 'promised land' for these Institutions; for example, in Paris alone, where in 1789 there were only 46 monastic and 71 conventual establishments, there are now in 1875 70 for male and 120 for female 'Religious', besides 60 centres of 'Christian Brothers' and 'Sisters of St. Vincent-de-Paul' engaged in Communal Schools; no less than 46 educational establishments are directed by religious orders, and the Jesuits have besides their School of St. Ignatius, three other large houses, at Vaugirard, the Rue des Postes, and the Rue de Naples.

At Amiens the writer has, within the last few weeks, noted the following Houses in a short walk—Carmelites, Clarisses, Les Dames de la Sainte Famille, Les Dames de Louvencourt, Les Dames du Sacré Cœur, La Maison du Bon Pasteur, Les Ursulines, Les Visitandines, Les Fidèles Compagnons de Jesus, Les Franciscains.

This in a population of about 65,000 inhabitants. While at Boulogne-sur-Mer there are 22 Churches, 5 Brotherhoods, and 15 Sisterhoods.

In Bavaria, within 50 years, there are over 630 Conventual Establishments, with at least 6000 inmates. In the Diocese of Cologne their numbers increased, between 1850 and 1872, from 272 to 3131; in Breslau from 228 to 1458, and pretty nearly in the same ratio in other German Districts.\*

In the Canton of Geneva, the Grand Council in August 1875, decided by a large majority of 64 to 7, to suppress the Convents of the Sisters of Charity. From the outcry which this proceeding has raised, one would imagine that these Sisters had been much required,

\* A recent work, 'The Monastic and Conventual Orders in Bavaria, and the Problem of Imperial Legislation,' by Herr Dürschmidt, Privy Councillor, gives invaluable details of the growth and possessions of these corporations.



and had gone there from a sort of compulsion, and had sacrificed themselves for the greater glory of God.

Far from this, it was with the greatest difficulty they succeeded in obtaining any footing at all in Geneva.

It was while the Canton was still under French rule that they endeavoured to settle there, but were refused permission by the Prefect. In 1808, however, *three* of them came with special letters of recommendation from Napoleon I. and from his mother, and were allowed to hire a house. There was at that time a lay-school for girls in the town receiving a State grant of 24*l.* a year; within a year the Sisters managed to effect an entrance and then take the entire charge of this Institution, the grant being raised first to 36*l.*, and then to 48*l.* a year—while the number of Sisters was more than doubled.

In a very short time the State aid was increased to 80*l.*, but the Council reserved the right of controlling the numbers of the 'Religious' and their Institutions. Was any opposition raised to these encroachments? the ready reply was then as now, 'Do you imagine those devoted women dream of proselytizing? Not at all—their sole object is charity.' In 1827 a struggle took place for a further increase in their numbers, and for authorization to possess property in lands and houses, and notwithstanding the opposition of the Cantonal Council, their establishments increased, and the Sisters increased to the number of 51, while all this time the 'Little Sisters of the Poor' had likewise been taking up their position throughout the Canton. And now after having fomented discord and ill-feeling throughout the whole district they have been dispersed after the greatest patience and long-suffering on the part of the Authorities.

The Report of the Commission declares that it is in self-defence alone this step has been taken, and though admiring the personal self-denial and devotion of the Sisters, 'yet, if we reflect on the formidable machinery of which they are either voluntarily or unconsciously so important a part; if we disclose the objects of these Associations, all of which centre in Rome, and radiate everywhere to serve as instruments of strife, fanaticism, and universal dominion—then we fail to see the benefits of exclusive charity—we desire to shut out from the Canton of Geneva these advanced guards, who in France are preparing clerical universities, miracles, and superstitions, who in Belgium direct Pilgrimages, foment Carlism in Spain, insurrections in San Salvador and Mexico, and cover England and the United States with a politico-religious organization, of which Liberty, though the pretext, is very soon the victim.'

With regard to our own country, the Catholic Directory and other statistics inform us that there are now in Great Britain (not including Ireland), no less than 99 Religious Houses for men, and 299 for women—of which 42 for the former and 95 of the latter were in the Dioceses of Southwark and Westminster; besides these there are 21 Colleges conducted by Josephites, Benedictines, Jesuits, and other orders, where the payments are so absurdly small (from 2*l.* to 4*l.*

per annum), as to suggest that the worthy Fathers have funds derived from other quarters to defray their expenditure, and that proselytism is the real incentive for these cheap terms.\*

For instance, the Jesuits at some Institutions will take boys under 12 at 35*l.*, and over 12 at 40*l.* per annum; and other Institutions receive boys under 12 for 28*l.* per annum; day schools charge 1*l.* 1*s.* per quarter. The Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul take in little boys at 14*l.* per annum; the 'Faithful Companions of Jesus' take girls for 16*l.* per annum; and day boarders at 1*l.* 1*s.* a quarter. The Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus charge 12*l.* per annum only. Private schools also emulate this good example; at a fashionable watering-place in the South of England, a lady receives Catholic 'daughters of gentlemen at 15*l.* per annum, or children of visitors at 7*s.* 6*d.* a week.'

To say that children can even be properly fed at such rates is impossible; what shall we say as to their tuition? One thing is evident, that the object is solely to attract children from the general schools, and to induce 'heretics' to avail themselves of this means of educating their families, on account of its economy.

If, however, justice can be done to pupils at such rates, it is evident that these Institutions must have other funds to defray the expenses, and that they are too well off to need our charitable contributions; and above all let us not forget that all property possessed by Religious Corporations in this country is practically vested, not in those separate Institutions, but in the Superiors or Generals of those Orders who are rarely British subjects or residents in Britain, so that in reality foreigners and humble servants of the Pontiff own the broad acres and freehold estates and ever-accumulating riches of these Institutions.

The Nuns and Little Sisters and other teaching and nursing confraternities or sisterhoods are the most successful pioneers of their Church—their neighbourhoods are deluged with cheap literature full of the most distorted statements of historic facts and current events; with school-books in which religious tenets are inculcated under the garb of grammar, geography, and arithmetic, and in which every opportunity is taken to revile and degrade the faith of those with whom they differ in religious belief. Foster instruction they cannot, for their Church has invariably withheld it wherever she has had the power to do so, as in Ireland, Spain, Portugal, South America, and Italy; and where obliged to depart from her cherished custom, gives a stunted and perverted education which proves more pernicious than none at all.

As to 'Nazareths' and Hospitals, we have seen from their founders' own words that Charity in its truest and highest sense is not the feeling that has actuated them; they create and foster pauperism and mendicancy; † they extend ecclesiastical influence, and increase

\* There are also English and Scotch seminaries for ecclesiastical training at Rome, Douai, Lisbon, Valladolid, Bruges.

† The existence of our grievous burden of poor-rates is distinctly traceable to the indiscriminate charity of monastic establishments, which when suppressed east crowds of idle, ignorant vagrants on the public; unwilling to work, and



the number of their dependants ; yet all is done in the sacred name of Charity, to attack which seems to the world selfish and invidious, bigoted and narrow-minded ; yet we do not hesitate to repeat that this is not the Charity which 'Seeketh not her own'—the real Charity which is undertaken without hope of return or reward of any kind ; for these are done not only as works of merit which obtain special favour from Heaven,—it is a barter and traffic for which they expect in return the loftiest reward that can be offered to mortal man, even eternal Salvation—a recompense more rapid and more certain, if in addition to these good works they can bring over proselytes to their fold, which in the end is the one object looked to, for which no means are left untried, however dubious they may be. Another point in this system is also worthy of observation—and this is, the complacency with which its promoters will crave and accept money from those very heretics whom they look on with about the same horror as a Mahomedan or a Hindoo does ; whom they believe most conscientiously to be in mortal sin and doomed to everlasting damnation—intermarrying with whom is, to use a mild term, discountenanced ; who have been cursed by Bell, Book, and Candle, anathematized by every successive Pontiff, including the present one, and whose forefathers have been relentlessly destroyed by them wherever it has been possible to do so.

There is really something original in this phase of human nature, in this unblushing effrontery which considers it quite consistent with self-respect to beg of those whom they pity, despise, and curse ; to obtain the sinews of war, and the means of carrying on the contest, from the very camp they are attacking by every means in their power. There is not, we believe, a single Religion on the globe whose professors condescend to support and extend their faith by begging systematically of those holding an opposite creed—for let it be remembered that there is no similarity between these Religious Charities and our great asylums or hospitals where we have no distinction of creed and no attempt at proselytism, which pervades every Roman Catholic 'Charity'—and is its essential element and *raison d'être*.

But more than this, we know absolutely nothing of what is done with the funds they thus obtain from us ; we know that their outdoor relief both here and abroad is so small as to be almost worthless (*vide Blue Book on Poor Relief Abroad*), but we do not know what sums are sent out of the country for the 'prisoner' of the Vatican, or the 'persecuted' German clergy, or are used even incapable of it from long habits of pauperism and dependence engendered by doles, which only produced servility and hypocrisy, these victims of a mistaken system would have starved but for the enactment of these poor-laws, which still continue to be such an incubus on the country.

In Rome itself this pauperising influence was carried so far that there was a regular authorised 'Beggars' Society,' of several hundred members, who were all licensed, and this fraternity actually had Cardinal York for its 'Protector' at the Vatican ; while Cardinal Moroschini, writing in 1870, stated that a chosen band of forty beggars received licenses from the Cardinal-Vicar to stand at church doors during the 'Forty Hours,' and the faithful had to pass through two long rows of vociferous mendicants, whose clamour disturbed even the congregations within.—See the '*Blue-book on Poor-laws in Foreign Countries*, 1875.'



here for the distinct purpose of proselytism—for none of these societies for ‘charity’ give any account of the large sums they receive, or how they are expended: no balance-sheet, no semblance of an audit is ever seen, but every statement they make is to be taken on trust by the confiding public. But one fact is notorious, viz., that those charitable undertakings which do not also tend to the ‘advancement of the Faith’ are always the worst supported by the ‘pious;’ and this has received a very remarkable confirmation during the last few years in London, in the amounts subscribed in Catholic places of worship to the Hospital Sunday Fund.

Here is a thoroughly unsectarian object—prominent on its committee we find Cardinal Manning, Canon Oakeley, the Duke of Norfolk, the Marquis of Bute, &c.; no religious scruples can be alleged as a motive for not subscribing; while, on the other hand, the poor Catholics are the first to reap the benefits of the fund, occupying as they do a large share both of the in-door and out-door relief afforded by our hospitals and dispensaries.

Surely here, if anywhere, we might expect most important aid towards these noble institutions from members of a Church which is always talking of charity, asking it for herself, and making it one of the most meritorious of all good works.

Yet what do we find them contributing?

In 1873, seventy collections produced only	.	.	£639*
In 1874, eighty-seven collections	.	.	596
In 1875, seventy-eight collections	.	.	526

or about one-fiftieth of the total amount collected, and even that showing a steady decrease.

Now, after making every allowance for their poor in each district, when we consider the remaining number of Catholics in London (far more than in Rome itself), their social status, their wealth, the boasted number of important converts, who we are assured, constantly join their ranks, and the number of foreigners, permanently residing here, these figures are certainly remarkable, and become still more so when we compare them with the amounts contributed by some other communities on that Sunday. For example:—

	1874.	1875.
The Independents contributed	£2,232	£1,700
The Baptists	1,080	866
The Wesleyans	996	895
The Jews (only 20 collections)	950	1,015
The English Presbyterians (17 collections)	393	536

While, as an additional contrast,

Mr. Spurgeon obtained on that Sunday	£210	£167
Mr. Tucker, at the Camden Road Chapel	100	75
Moody and Sankey	.	182

Let it be remembered, that next to the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church is the most numerous of all religious com-

\* We purposely omit shillings and pence, lest we should weary our readers with too many statistics.

munities in Great Britain, and we think that these figures [which might have been rendered still more forcible by a comparison with the amounts obtained from yet smaller congregations] will afford the most recent and convincing proof that that Church has but little sympathy with those charities which have no elements of proselytism, and cannot be utilized to extend its own peculiar tenets: in other words, that the amount the faithful Catholics contribute as pure charity—that which seeketh not her own, is infinitesimally small.

We fail to see any real philanthropy in those who, 'with a blind fond trust,' characteristic of carelessness for their own faith, support in our midst these centres of conversion of whose practices they are supremely ignorant, but whose real retrogressive and mediæval aims have of late been vigorously renewed in this country.\*

Do our readers require a more distinct statement of these aims, or a proof that we do not overstate our case? For those who do we will give it in Cardinal Manning's own words, as reported in the 'Tablet' for 6th August, 1859:—

'If ever there was a land in which work is to be done, and perhaps much to suffer, it is here. I shall not say too much, if I say that *we have to subjugate and subdue, to conquer and rule an Imperial race*: we have to do with a will which reigns throughout the world, as the will of Rome reigned once; *we have to bend or break that will which nations and kingdoms have found invincible and inflexible* . . . Were heresy conquered in England it would be conquered throughout the world. All its lines meet here, and therefore in England the Church of God must be gathered in its strength.'

Let those, who with the page of history before them as a bitter commentary on these defiant words, still appreciate the prospect of such a future—let such aid its advent by supporting the Mendicant Orders, and simultaneously with their increase, introduce into our land the helplessness, servility, and superstition so characteristic of the lower classes in the two great Catholic Peninsulas, and, indeed, of every place where this pauperising system of ecclesiastical doles has had full and uncontrolled sway.

\* Monsignor Capel stated at Bradford, on 3rd May, 1876, that the highest subscription received in aid of the building of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church there came from a Protestant; that amongst the many friends who had assisted Canon Motler in the erection of that Church there were several Protestants, and, moreover, the Canon himself declared that for the erection of the two schools he had obtained the greater portion of the money from Protestants.—Vide *Tablet* 14th May, 1876.





